

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-11 OMB-01 SAI-01 AID-05 IGA-02 EB-07 EA-07

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R 061708Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8117

INFO USDAO ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0212

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, DM, UR

SUBJ: SOVIET IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING FOR BENIN ARMED FORCES AND
POLICE

1. SOVIET UNION HAS OFFERED THE BENIN SECURITY FORCES 20
PLACES IN A TEN MONTH LONG POLITICAL/IDEOLOGICAL TRAINING
COURSE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN MARCH 76. THERE ARE SPACES AVAILABLE
FOR TEN OFFICERS AND TEN NCOS FROM THE BENINESE ARMED FORCES
AND POLICE.

2. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCE, THE FRENCH MILITARY ATTACHE, THERE
HAVE ALREADY BEEN 12 VOLUNTEERS FROM THE ARMED FORCES AND
FIVE FROM THE POLICE FOR THE TEN SLOTS RESERVED FOR OFFICERS.
EXCEPT FOR ONE GENDARERIE CAPT, ALL THE VOLUNTEERS ARE YOUNG
LIEUTENANTS OR SECOND LTS.

3. FRENCH ADVISORS WITHIN THE GENDARERIE REPORT THAT LT COL
BARTHELEMEY OHOUENS, ITS COMMANDER, HAS REJECTED THE APPLI-
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CATION OF ALL FIVE GENDARMES WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED SO FAR.

HE GAVE NO REASON.

4. COMMENT: OHOUENS' REFUSAL IS PROBABLY BASED ON IDEOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS. NEVER CONSIDERED A RADICAL, OHOUENS IS NOT LIKELY TO WANT HIS HEADQUARTERS MANNED BY TRAINED COMMUNIST IDEOLOGUES. WE SUSPECT, HOWEVER, THAT HIS OPPOSITION WILL NOT STAND UP. PRES KEREKOU AND RADICAL MEMBERS OF THE BENIN LEADERSHIP ARE LIKELY TO OVERCOME HIS RESISTANCE. FOR EXAMPLE, A FEW MONTHS AGO KEREKOU REVERSED A DECISION BY OHOUENS TO ASK FRANCE FOR REPLACEMENTS FOR ADVISORS WITH THE GENDARMERIE WHOSE ASSIGNMENTS ARE UP NEXT YEAR.

5. THE POLICE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBJECTED TO COMMUNIST INDOCTRINATION DURING TRAINING COURSES GIVEN BY THE NORTH KOREANS AT THE LOCAL POLICE ACADEMY.

6. WE BELIEVE THAT, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF PILOT TRAINING, THIS WILL BE THE FIRST DIRECT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT WITH THE BENINESE ARMED FORCES. IN OUR OPINION, WE HAVE SEEN THUS FAR ONLY THE BEGINNING OF COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN BENIN'S ARMED FORCES AND POLICE. AS THE FRENCH RAPIDLY PHASE OUT THEIR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (INCLUDING ADVISORS) THE GPRB WILL RELY ON THE SOVIETS, NORTH KOREANS AND PERHAPS THE CHINESE TO FILL THE GAP. BY THE END OF 1976, THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PICTURE HERE WILL HAVE CHANGED SUBSTANTIALY.
ENGLE

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